L: Haitiana B-4,1 (1936) 1937 EV2 [illegible] EV2
Mirebalais

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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge.

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The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination.

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The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bizango," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey.

[202 171]

Nowo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarrelling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

Baka, *loups-garous*, and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Mah' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *houngans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. These with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux*. With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi*. To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

D. Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1968 393 0682 593

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Aranphonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rabaniers*, or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonnis*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful horse driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shoreside there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwadi (the King of Lwalwadi) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions. [416]

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] [531] [535] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *rasyé* (enraged, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

in some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Charivari band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *maît' Rara*, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the *maît' Rara* actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the *maît' Rara* himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the *roi Lwalwadi*, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The *maît' Rara* has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food.

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé zarti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its *payé zarti*, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a bewildered basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house.

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the *roi Lwalwadi* dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first *roi Lwalwadi* in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture.

The *roi Lwalwadi* is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from reis of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet

[1] [Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 92. Cf. p. 351, Category 116.—Analyst]

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwadi and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jeer*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *drôlesse* is seen. The *drôlesse* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One drôlesse observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[3]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[3] [Footnote appears in Category 16, p. 351. --Analyst]

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mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Lev Rwa*).

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Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are *enmanscrapo* sticks, *cha-cha* rattles, metal rattles called *ardoney*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouvenine*), candelabra begging candles or oil lamps (*lawapouv*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *konze* finger drum, *acoute* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums.

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The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and costume queens as a substitute.

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Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips.

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Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special *bondor* services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the lwa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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69. Rara dancing near Gonaïves. Vaccine players are at the left.

70. A Rara group near Port-au-Prince. At the left are the baka drum and a tymbale. One of the four vaccines, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the musical flag and a lamp-pin.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
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71. *Rara at Léogane. Behind the dancing majors [one] a member of the group shakes their banner, which depicts a bird catching a lizard. The costumes are traditional and are believed to date from colonial days.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-00]
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72. *A roi Lavalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

SV1
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73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]
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[184] 16. *A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south.*
[071] *Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

476 241 532 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[A]

476 241 461 594 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayamba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 595 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[A] [For footnote see Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

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Mousondi na fai la guè!
Eya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Eya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [515] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 178 575 [476] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in attenuated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda 000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, P.256. Cf. P.353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

how much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as malevolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held.

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2]

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have.

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeaubeaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs.

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbindingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou.

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance:

Balbindingue!
C'est là n'homme mwé yé!
Cimitière tonnerre!
Balbindingue!
C'ex yun seul tambour qui danse!
Pardon mon père!
Balbindingue!
C'est là n'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

2 n [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, P. 353. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!
Cemetery thunder!
Balbindingue!
It is a single drum which dances!
Pardon, my father!
Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!

It is told of the Vinbindingue that their members are sometimes required to subject themselves to the ordeal of rubbing hot peppers in their eyes, which results in acute pain and temporary blindness. According to some explanations, this is one of the "tests" of a Vinbindingue man. Red, inflamed eyes are a standard symbol of malevolence. One informant explained that the Vinbindingue members blind themselves so that they cannot see what kind of flesh they are eating:

Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma mésé piment!
Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma mésé diffé! [Ex. 125]

My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put pepper in them!
My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put fire in them!

Another Vinbindingue song is a humorously macabre dialogue between the members of the society and a victim. He is asked whether he would prefer to be quartered or eaten whole. Each time they are about to act according to his wishes he changes his mind:

Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt? Déquatier!
C'est catcha dévoré ça ou pitôt?
Moin'm assez déquatier!

C'est catcha dévoré ça ou pitôt?
Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Moin pitot dévoré!

Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Moin pitot déquatier! [Ex. 126]

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer? To be quartered!
Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
I've been quartered enough!

Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be devoured!

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be quartered!

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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A brief song identifies by name a man who has participated in a Vin-bindingue affair:

Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti mounc yo!
Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti mounc yo! [Ex. 127]

Last night Cimila ate little children!
Last night Cimila ate little children!

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A Calinda song speaks more tangently of its business. It refers to doing "washing," a very special kind of washing that requires no bluing:

Waille waille waille, savonné sans mété 'digo!
Waille waille waille, savonné sans mété 'digo! [Ex. 128]

Waille waille waille, wash without bluing!
Waille waille waille, wash without bluing!

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And a Zeaubeaup song complains that a ouanga (a black-magic bundle) has been swallowed by a snake. It seems to specify that some of the members of the group are zombies, the animated dead:

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L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
L'Arcahaye, couléve valé ouanga moin!
Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zombies!

Arcahaye I was there I was there!
Arcahaye I was there I was there!
At Arcahaye a snake swallowed my *ouanga*!
Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zombies!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.